

# Local club putting best feet forward

FC Westchester having  
big run as teams get set  
for major tournaments

Harold Gutmann

hgutmann@lohud.com

As the president of the premier soccer club FC Westchester, Lonny Unger is used to seeing championships, including at least one state title every year this decade.

But never this many, and never like this. Over the next two weeks, four teams will be traveling down the East Coast to compete in major tournaments.

"This is the most successful year we've had," Unger said.

The U12 and U13 teams won the U.S. Youth Soccer Eastern New York Championships (the State Cup) and advanced to regionals July 2-7 in West Virginia, while the U15 team finished second. Meanwhile, the U16 and U18 teams qualified for the U.S. Soccer Development Academy playoffs in Greensboro, N.C., Friday-June 29, and are one step away from the national championships at the Home Depot Center in Los Angeles next month.

Director of coaching Dave McCollum spreads the credit around.

"You have to have good players who want to get better, good coaches who care about the players and want to help them, and very dedicated parents, because we demand a lot of their time and a lot of parents have to make sacrifices to put their kids through the program," said McCollum, the head coach of the U16 team.

Of the 78 programs involved in the development academy, FC Westchester is one of 18 to have both the U16 and U18 teams qualify.

The U16 team started slowly, thanks in part to a schedule that had it play 13 of its first 15 games on the road, but a second-half run carried it into the playoffs. Center forward Hiroki Kobayashi of Scarsdale has scored 13 of the team's 35 goals, while Rye Country Day sophomore Taylor Washington leads the de-

The U18 team is attempting to get to Los Angeles for the second straight year. The offense, which averages two goals a game, is led by forwards Arturo Barajas of New Rochelle and Cobi Span of North Salem, and center midfielder Tommy McNamara of Nyack who is headed to Brown.

# CLUB: Big year for FC Westchester

CONTINUED FROM 1C

The team is coached by 37-year-old Iona assistant Chris Gonzalez, a 100-goal scorer at Mamaroneck High who joined FC Westchester in its first year and came back to coach in 1997.

"I knew I wanted to stay involved in the game and coach at the highest possible level and contribute to my club," Gonzalez said.

The nucleus of the U18 team has won three State Cups, so they know what it takes to win championships. But one question mark will be how they handle the Greensboro weather — it's expected to be in the 90s and very humid.

The U11 team, which won its Westchester Youth Soccer League division in the fall and the spring this season, is also coached by an original FCW player, Carlos Casas.

But despite all the success, McCollum isn't satisfied.

"I want to keep pushing," McCollum said. "I'm not for resting on our laurels. We want to get better and continue to be regarded as a quality club where we push a lot of players into college programs and hopefully the national team."



Submitted by FC Westchester

Andres Penfold of Scarsdale plays for the FC Westchester U16 U.S. Soccer Development Academy team.